

EUROPA ORBITER: SEARCHING FOR AN OCEAN

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The Europa Orbiter mission is designed to search for definitive evidence for a current subsurface ocean on Europa and to characterize the overlying ice layer and surface sufficiently to plan future exploration. Among the investigations suggested for the mission are geodetic, gravity and altimetry measurements to characterize the diurnal tides, imaging and spectral observations, and ice-penetrating radar. NASA is scheduled to select the payload and investigations in the Spring of 2000. The status of the mission and plans for Europa exploration will be discussed.